



AOT in Action

Welcome to AOT in Action, your weekly e-newsletter from the Arizona Office of Tourism (AOT).

A Message from Director Sherry Henry:

Good afternoon,

This year marks the 10 year anniversary of Proposition 202, the Arizona Benefits Fund. As a result of this proposition, Arizona Tribes have funded nearly one billion dollars to support education, trauma and emergency care, wildlife conservation and economic development through tourism.

As a recipient of a portion of this funding, AOT wishes to congratulate the Tribes on this remarkable accomplishment and extend gratitude for what this funding has done to our program of work. With this funding, the AOT has been able to further enhance research projects, advertising campaigns, online marketing initiatives and trade & media relations efforts all to the tremendous benefit of our state. To learn more about Prop 202, visit www.gm.state.az.us.

Have a great week,

Sherry Henry
Director, Arizona Office of Tourism

AOT News

Arizona Media Marketplace 2012 Brings Access to 60 Journalists

The Arizona Office of Tourism held the Arizona Media Marketplace 2012 at the Four Seasons Scottsdale at Troon North, last Thursday, Nov. 15 in conjunction with the annual Travel Classics West Conference. AOT was joined by 43 statewide tourism partners including suppliers and

DMOs. Sixty writers, editors, and freelancers were at the event representing Arizona media outlets including the *Arizona Republic*, *AAA Arizona Highroads*, Channel 12 News, *Raising Arizona Kids*, *True West Magazine*, in addition to national publications ranging from *Every Day with Rachel Ray*, *O The Oprah Magazine*, to *Outside* and *Sunset* magazines, and travelandleisure.com. As lunch was served, attendees enjoyed a special demonstration, given by Art of the People, Inc., an inspiring group of American Indian artisans. Attendees were able to experience and learn from six master artists from both the Navajo and Hopi Tribes, as they collectively created a work of art, drawing from each individual style. For more information please contact Kara Woroniec at kworoniec@azot.gov or 602-364-3715.

Congratulations to all the AAA 5 & 4 Diamond Award Winners!

AOT wishes to congratulate all the AAA Five and Four Diamond award winners. Arizona is the recipient of a combined 70 Five and Four Diamond properties and restaurants. This is truly a prestigious designation as less than four percent of the 65,000 North America properties evaluated for 2011 earned the Four Diamond status, and less than one-half of one percent earned the coveted Five Diamond award. For a complete list of Arizona winners, visit az.aaa.com/diamonds.

AOT Reports on China and Brazil Now Available

AOT's summary reports on the agency's exploratory missions to China and Brazil are now available by request. The reports include observations and insights learned pertaining to each market. AOT also conducted product inventories for both markets, which are also available and referred to in the report. For more information, contact Kristen Swanson at 602-364-3696 or via email at kswanson@azot.gov.

AOT is Seeking a Contractor for Nogales Tourism Marketing Pilot Project

AOT partnered with the Nogales Port Authority (NPA), Nogales Community Development (NCD) and the City of Nogales to identify and analyze Nogales, Arizona's tourism assets. The partners are proceeding with a plan to develop Nogales' tourism product and tourism marketing. AOT is seeking a contractor to assist in coordinating and developing a tourism development and marketing plan and make recommendations that may be implemented by Nogales, AZ. To review the Request for Quotation, visit www.azot.gov/procurement. For more information, contact Mary-Ellen Kane at 602-364-3709 or via email at mkane@azot.gov.

Upcoming Events & Activities

Canada Media Mission

Date: November 26- 30

Location: Toronto, ON and Montreal, QC

Los Angeles Media Marketplace

Date: January 15, 2013

Location: Los Angeles, CA

[National Tour Association Marketplace](#)

Date: January 20-24, 2013

Location: Orlando, FL

Industry News

U.S. Travel Projects 98,800 New Travel Jobs in 2013

The U.S. Travel Association projects that growth in leisure, business and international inbound travel next year will create 98,800 American jobs in 2013. Leisure travel is expected to rise 1.2 percent, business travel is projected to increase nearly 1 percent and international inbound travel will increase 4 percent. These job gains will increase direct travel industry employment to more than 7.6 million jobs next year.

“The focus of this election season has been how to put Americans back to work, and our industry is uniquely capable of adapting to economic upswings and creating jobs,” said Roger Dow, president and CEO of the U.S. Travel Association. “Given our industry’s immense potential not only nationally, but also for local and state economies, we call on the Administration and Members of Congress to build a plan for economic recovery that drives significant increases in travel.”

Domestic leisure travel is expected to increase 1.2 percent in 2013, a new record high, but the growth will be at a slower pace than during the past few years. While business travel volume will slow significantly next year to less than 1 percent, the number of business trips has grown steadily since the downturn in 2009 and is expected to see more positive growth in 2014. Total domestic travel spending, including leisure and business travel, will increase 3 percent.

“While the growth rate is more moderate than in previous years, leisure travel remains at an all-time high and is an indicator of rising consumer confidence,” said David Huether, senior vice president of research and economics for the U.S. Travel Association. “Businesses continue to have a heightened focus on the value and bottom-line benefits of travel. We feel the slight increase in business travel next year continues to reflect demand for face-to-face meetings that drive growth and productivity.”

Total international inbound travel will increase 4 percent in 2013 while spending will grow 7.1 percent. International travelers now account for 15.1 percent of total travel spending in the U.S., up from 14.3 percent in 2011.

Overseas travel to the U.S. (excluding Canada and Mexico) will grow 4.3 percent, a slight decrease from last year’s 4.8 percent increase. While the numbers continue to trend upward, any slowdown in travel growth is of concern because overseas travelers contribute significantly more to the U.S. economy, spending an average of \$4,300 per trip. (*Travel Pulse*, Nov. 02)

U.S. Travel Reports Travel Exports at Highest Levels in Six Months

The U.S. Travel Association, in an analysis of the U.S. Commerce Department’s announcement on September 2012 exports, found that travel exports rebounded in September to a six-month

high, rising \$192 million to \$13.9 billion. Travel exports actually grew faster than travel imports, according to U.S. Travel, resulting in a \$3.9 billion travel trade surplus for September, the highest surplus in 12 months.

“The growth in travel exports continues to outpace those in all other sectors, increasing 7.8 percent year-to-date, a remarkable 67 percent faster than the 4.6 percent rise in other exports of goods and services,” said David Huether, senior vice president of research and economics for U.S. Travel. “As a result, travel exports now account for 12 percent of total U.S. export growth so far this year, nearly twice the percentage at this same time last year.”

Huether said the positive economic impact of international travelers visiting the United States is one of the key reasons why policymakers should support policies that would increase visitation, such as the JOLT act. “An increase in travel exports results in a corresponding increase in quality middle-class jobs for Americans. It’s one of the best ways to help shorten unemployment lines across the country,” he said. (*Travel Pulse*, Nov. 11)

STR Reports Weekly Performance Declines for U.S. Hotel Industry

The U.S. hotel industry experienced mostly negative results in the three key performance metrics during the week of Oct. 28 to Nov. 3, according to data from STR. In year-over-year comparisons, occupancy fell 2.5 percent to 57.7 percent, average daily rate was up 1.2 percent to \$104.40, and revenue per available room decreased 1.3 percent to \$60.22.

“Hurricane Sandy affected many key East Coast markets in the U.S., as well as across the country,” said Brad Garner, COO at STR. “Many travelers across the country were stranded due to airport closures along the East Coast. New York City saw relatively favorable results in spite of the storm. Halloween, which fell on a Wednesday this year, also affected the weekly performance, putting a damper on group travel for the week.” The hurricane made landfall on Monday, Oct. 29.

Among the top 25 markets, Los Angeles-Long Beach reported the largest occupancy increase, rising 8.1 percent to 75 percent. Four markets reported double-digit occupancy decreases -- Washington, D.C. (down 25.8 percent to 51.7 percent); Boston (down 19.7 percent to 63.1 percent); Norfolk-Virginia Beach, Va. (down 10.7 percent to 41.5 percent); and St. Louis (down 10.4 percent to 57.6 percent).

San Diego achieved the largest ADR increase, rising 13.2 percent to \$137.17, followed by Los Angeles-Long Beach with a 12.6 percent increase to \$142.04.

Four markets reported double-digit RevPAR increases -- Los Angeles-Long Beach (up 21.7 percent to \$106.54); Detroit (up 15.8 percent to \$51.54); San Diego (up 13.3 percent to \$88.10); and Anaheim-Santa Ana, Calif. (up 11.7 percent to \$77.01).

Washington, D.C. experienced the largest decreases in ADR (down 16 percent to \$127.99) and RevPAR (down 37.6 percent to \$66.18) for the week. (*Travel Pulse*, Nov. 11)

America’s Great Outdoors: Salazar Announces Fee Free Days at National Parks, Other Public Lands for 2013

Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar today announced dates in 2013 ranging from Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Day to Veterans Day when more than 2,000 national parks, national forests, national wildlife refuges, and other federal lands will offer free admittance to everyone.

“Our national parks, national wildlife refuges, national forests and other public lands offer every American a place to enjoy outdoor recreation, learn about our nation’s history and culture, and restore our souls and spirits by connecting with the natural beauty and wildness of our land,” Salazar said. “By providing free admission, we are putting out an invitation to all Americans to visit and enjoy these extraordinary treasures that belong to all our people.”

The National Park Service and U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service will waive their entrance fees and the Bureau of Land Management, the U.S. Forest Service, and the Bureau of Reclamation will waive their standard amenity fees on September 28 for National Public Lands Day and from November 9 to 11 for Veterans Day weekend.

The National Park Service will also waive entrance fees on January 21 for Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, from April 22 to 26 during National Park Week, and on August 25 to celebrate the agency’s 97th birthday.

The U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service will also waive entrance fees on January 21 for Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day and on October 13 for National Wildlife Refuge Day.

The Bureau of Land Management will also waive standard amenity fees on January 21 for Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day.

The U.S. Forest Service will also waive standard amenity fees on January 21 for Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day and on June 8 for Get Outdoors Day.

Tourism and outdoor recreation are also powerful economic engines in communities across the country. Recreation on federal lands in 2009 provided 440,000 jobs and contributed \$55 billion to the economy.

The fee waiver does not cover expanded amenity or user fees for things such as camping, boat launches, transportation, or special tours. Active duty military members and their dependents are eligible for a free annual pass that provides entrance to lands managed by the National Park Service, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, Bureau of Land Management, Bureau of Reclamation, and the U.S. Forest Service. The America the Beautiful National Parks and Federal Recreational Lands Pass Program also offers a free lifetime pass for people with disabilities, a \$10 lifetime senior pass for those ages 62 and over, and an \$80 annual pass for the general public.

America’s great outdoors should be experienced by everyone,” said Salazar. “Our fantastic network of public lands provides world class recreational opportunities, the chance to view abundant wildlife in natural habitats, sites that showcase our nation’s rich and diverse history, and some of the most incredible scenery found anyway. The fee free days will give both first time and repeat visitors a good reason to spend time in these extraordinary places.” *(Nov. 11)*

AAA: More people to travel thrifty this Thanksgiving

More people will hit the road for the Thanksgiving holiday this year, but they'll do so with tighter belts because of the sluggish economy, AAA predicted Tuesday. The travel group projects that 43.6 million Americans will travel at least 50 miles for the holiday weekend, an increase of 0.7% from last year. If so, that would mark the fourth consecutive year of increases since the financial crisis of 2008.

Ninety percent will drive to Thanksgiving destinations and 7% will fly, according to Robert Darbelnet, AAA president. The average travel budget this year is \$498, which he said is down from \$544 last year. Behind the predicted curb in spending, he said, is a year's worth of expensive gasoline, although its price has dropped from a peak in September to about the same level as last Thanksgiving. Rental cars will be \$10, or 25%, higher a day.

The price of flying also will be higher. Online travel agent Travelocity calculated that the average airfare is up 9% for the Thanksgiving travel period of Nov. 17 to 27. It found the average airfare of \$386 is about \$5 less than for the Fourth of July holiday. Travelocity also found hotel room rates are about 2.4% higher than last year.

"So while year-over-year prices are up, Thanksgiving fares are about what we were seeing this summer on popular travel weekends," says Courtney Scott, a senior editor at Travelocity.

Less-expensive options include flying on Thanksgiving Day and returning the next day or the following Tuesday, she says.

The Transportation Security Administration reminded fliers Tuesday that to get through airport checkpoints more easily over the holiday they shouldn't pack wrapped presents in carry-on bags because security officers may need to unwrap them.

The TSA reiterated that fliers cannot carry weapons and fluids in containers larger than 3.4 ounces in carry-on bags. Smaller containers of liquids are allowed if placed in a clear, quart-sized bag for screening.

The agency suggested holiday travelers should put larger containers of cranberry sauce, creamy dips, jams, syrup or sauces in checked luggage.

If travelers have any questions, the agency has a smartphone application, MyTSA, to answer what is allowed in carry-on bags. The agency also has a "TSA Cares" phone number, 855-787-2227, to answer questions about what people with disabilities or medical conditions can expect to face at airport checkpoints.

"As we look at the holidays fast approaching, we are anticipating a busy travel season once again," TSA Administrator John Pistoletto said. "That can create major challenges and opportunities for the traveling public, especially those who travel infrequently." (*USA Today*, Nov. 13)

Calendar of Events

Visit www.ArizonaGuide.com to find information on all the exciting [events, festivals and activities](#) held throughout the Grand Canyon State!

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